

## Chapter 7: Those Who Earned Your Anger

After going through a labyrinth of white corridors, administrative staff, and a large elevator whose doors clanked like beasts, I found His brothers and nephews just outside the door to the room. They hugged me, though I did not hug them back.

In some ways they were more religious than us, in other ways, less. One of His brothers was a *ḥāfiẓ* (a person who memorized the *Qur'ān*). This brother wore a purplish brown *thawb* with a black waistcoat on top. This brother was the *Imām* (Islamic leader, usually for congregational *ṣalāh* in a *Sunnī* context) for a mosque in His community. This brother made his children memorize the *Qur'ān*, speak the language of their people, and follow the typical *Sunnī* brand of social conservatism. However, his children were also tied to American culture. They played basketball religiously and we watched American movies and *shōnen anime* (Japanese animations targeted to boys and young men) whenever I visited. They collected *anime* figures of their favorite fighters while keeping up to date about popular American athletes. I was familiar with *anime* and *manga* (Japanese graphic novels) since it provided fantastical distractions and introspection when I was depressed. It is not surprising that I gravitated towards art dealing with suffering, war, and death. But since many orthodox Muslims clutch their pearls when it comes to art, these interests were strictly quarantined from the rest of my life. Some online forums are filled with people claiming that the depiction of magic and gods made fantasy *ḥarām* to read or watch or play. I wonder if these people would condemn their own cousins for playing the *Legend*

of *Zelda*. This was part of the reason why I gave up on finding maturity and community on the internet. Internet algorithms bring out the worst in people.

He did not make me memorize the *Qur'ān*, but He would have undoubtedly thrown out action figures because of their approximation to idolatry (Islamic culture is predominantly iconoclastic). He obsessively ensured that I kept my pants above my ankles because of a *ḥadīth* which states the following:

*Mā 'asfala* (Whatever is below) *mina l-ka 'bayni* (the ankles) *mina l-'izāri* (of the lower garment) *fa-ft al-nār* (is in the Fire).”<sup>1</sup>

When He implored His brothers to do likewise with their children, they argued that those *ḥadīth* were meant for the specific culture of Arabia at the time of *The Prophet*, in which long, trailing garments were symbols of pride. If pride/vanity is not involved, they did not need to police their children on this specific matter.<sup>2</sup> He preferred the path which left no ambiguity. He was not exceptional in this respect. Many *Imāms* in Western *mosques* lambast cultural assimilation.

“Our kids are learning to love celebrities,” these *Imāms* would preach before the *Jumu'a Ṣalāh* (Friday prayer). “What do you do when you love a person? You want to imitate them, act like them, dress like them, believe what they believe.” The polemical subtext is hard to miss.

“Teach your kids to have love for *The Prophet*,” these *Imāms* would request of the fathers in the audience. “Teach them the *Sīra al-Nabawiyya* (the biography of *The Prophet*). Teach them to have love for the fact that they are Muslims. How much better would it be for them to love *The Prophet* and his teachings than to love these people who do drugs, who join gangs, who commit *zinā*, and who dress without shame.”

One of His brothers asked about the bandages around my hands, but I did not answer.

One of His brothers asked if I wanted anything to eat, but I did not answer.

We took turns donning personal protective equipment before entering the hospital room. Armored in gloves, a mask, and a paper-thin hospital apron, I slowly rounded the corner like a soldier expecting the barrel of a gun on the other side.

The room had beige walls and was dimly lit by old overhead fluorescent lights. There was a television screen on one of the walls playing some Western reality TV show. In a corner was a sink and closet containing a prayer mat for visitors to pray *Ṣalāh*.

In the center, a couple feet away from the window, He was there.

He appeared asleep under a blanket, mouth slightly agape. If not for the hospital gown, the sutures carving a large gash across His skull, and the tubes slithering around and through Him, I could have woken Him just by lightly touching His nose or forehead.

His family prayed at his bedside, reciting every *du‘ā’* they knew. They used a phone on a tripod to stream a WhatsApp video call for the relatives who could not visit.

His eyelids were slightly open, revealing glassy pupils which stared at something far away but without the ability to focus on it. There was once so much spirit in His eyes. Many times, it seemed like I was the decrepit, dying old man in his last days, and He the spry, young, sociable adolescent. That is how different we were.

His family talked to Him, asking if He could see or hear them. Every twitch and muscle contraction convinced them that He was going to return.

One of His brothers asked me to say something to Him, but I did not. In His mother’s last months, they did the same thing. I was optimistic enough to believe she was on a path to recovery, at least enough to wake up one last time. Then we went to her *Janāza* (funeral prayer) and buried her.

One of His brothers asked if I wanted to take off my coat, and I did not say anything.

One of His brothers asked if there was anything I wanted, and I said I wanted to be alone.

I knew I should be grateful. They were better than most people. There was not any family drama I knew of. They fed us well whenever we visited them. They were nice and loving people, and it showed in the way they visited Him here and did not complain about all my failures. But I did not have the energy or love to pretend to belong. All their *anime* and American movies and sports only made their queerphobia casual. It was something to tolerate among white people by avoiding entirely. Leaving the room counts as tolerance. They do not hate queer people, but a real Muslim does not cross the border, as in literally does not go to the places where these people frequented. If it is not something related to work, a real Muslim eats in Muslim restaurants in Muslim neighborhoods and prays their five daily *ṣalāh* at home and at the *mosque*. When one left the Muslim neighborhoods for recreation, one does so as a group of Muslim friends/family sharing a car (His nephews lived in a part of America that was generally unwalkable and lacking in reliable public transit). That was how I observed Bengali American Muslims tolerating queer people, though I of course could not describe how they behaved when they were alone. I was grateful for our amicable relationship, but He was the only thing that connected me to them. A wall separated us, just like all the people in this world.

I checked to make sure I was alone, hanging up the WhatsApp video call too. He was hollowed out, His bones poking through the skin. A part of me wanted to rest my head on His shoulder, pretending the clock could be reversed to a better time. But that was impossible. I destroy everything I touch.

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On that day, I ran and ran and ran. I ended up in a trail deep down a ravine. At daytime,

people biked and had picnics there, but in the dead of night, it was a pitch-black abyss.

In the middle of that abyss, I took out the knife. I did not have my phone with me, so there was no alternative. Suicidal ideation was not new to me, but until then it was always something I had under control. Something I thought about. Something I tried to imagine. Something I sketched plans for in my mind. But never something I executed. I did not do anything constituting a “cry for help” either since that would defeat the entire point of that Promise. For Him to believe that secret did not exist, I had to convince Him that whatever problem there was with me, it had no relation to Islam. And so, I maintained complete control, waiting for the day when I could execute a plan without a reason to tell me otherwise.

But even though I lost complete control of everything in that abyss, something still blocked me. Every instinct fought against the conclusion that there was no longer a reason to remain alive. Four hours went by in that state, the prefrontal and premotor cortices fighting against the cingulate cortex, amygdala and cerebellum.<sup>3</sup> I understood our competing mental processes by treating the brain structures as “sub-brains,” perhaps “sub-souls” and “sub-spirits” with independent wills. The brain’s decisions reflect the degree of cooperation and conflict between the sub-brains. I think she took over the emotional and memory sub-brains while I commanded the sub-brains for executive function. We waged war for the instinctual sub-brains, one overpowering the other depending on the situation.

“Can you hear me?” I asked.

He did not move a muscle.

When one is an only child, every recollection could be an error. An error in perception. An error in sequencing. An error in intuition. An error in judgement. An error in belief. An error in aspiration. An error in everything. If He had any other child, everything would have been fine.

He would be the “cool dad” who did woodwork, cooking, gardening, and interior design while being active in His community and joking around with His child. He was a man of many talents that I could never adequately honour. Any other child would have picked up His skills and pay Him back with ambitious success in this world and the next. I was just a stupid failure always holding Him back.

“What I said was not true,” I began, “I was just projecting what I knew about myself.”

No answer.

Was I abused? Some might say I was, but those people would encourage me to abandon Him just so that I could assimilate into the lowest rungs of this country. I do not think I was abused. It is an identity issue. Our relationship was too complicated to fit into patterns of neglect, violence, and financial mismanagement. Who else gave up everything they could have been to raise me? Who else broke their back so that I did not have to learn hunger and poverty? Who else was there for me when I was a friendless child? Who else was there for me when I was too depressed and incompetent to keep a job? Who else was there for me while I rotted away for ten years?<sup>4</sup> All the people of this country would have abandoned me the moment my baggage became an inconvenience. I could not blame them. They are already struggling without a living corpse dragging them down. It just meant that the right path was completing that Promise no matter what.

“I do not really believe your brothers and nephews have better lives without you. Their lives are better without me in it. I do not really hate your people. I just hate how I failed them all and how I am too weak to ever be a part of them, or anyone else for that matter. I do not really believe ma–your wife–was the cause of all the problems in our lives. It was me. I wish you had just killed me and moved on to a better child.”

As I said these words, my head throbbed, enough for my vision to blur. I rested my face in my palms as the pain radiated across my tensed jaw and neck. It should be a crime to reduce human beings to words. Even the identity issue is more complicated than what I described. My memories portrayed Him as an entirely Arabized ultra-orthodox Muslim, which I am certain conjures up images of a strict and life-denying personality. But that leaves out many things, such as how I occasionally heard Him singing along when a song from His people played on Facebook. I did not dare probe Him about it for fear that the sight of me would kill off that part of Him for good. There are a hundred thousand more such inconsistencies and contradictions about everything I ever thought about Him. For every mean thing He said, there were a thousand times He thanked me as if I had a six-figure job, just for basic things like making Him a poached egg for breakfast. For every time He was angry with me, there were a thousand times He smiled and wrapped an arm around mine on our walks to the *masjid* as if we were inseparable. With other people, He was highly charismatic, and it often seemed like they figured out how to settle their differences and become the husband and wife one sees in movies, laughing and joking and supporting one another. And a hundred thousand more things that words cannot describe.

I really believed I could complete that Promise for Him. I had an unnatural control over my emotions. Somewhere along the way, something snapped, and I never cried again. Then all my memories of crying disappeared, growing hazier and hazier until they could not be recalled at all. The same thing happened with other emotions and memories too, granting me complete control. They all fizzled out, blocked by my prefrontal cortex. It was as if my mind only had a cliff notes version of my life. I knew that they sought to diffuse into the functions of my prefrontal cortex as well. To deal with that, I must be humble, I must be grateful, I must be self-aware, I must suppress my *nafs*, and I must say as little as possible lest I lose control. If I could

do that, then all emotions will fizzle out, rendering me too tired to do anything except sleep and maintain the status quo.

“I am sorry,” I said.

I was no longer human. Humans needed a shoulder to cry on, a safe space to vent, a helping hand, an outlet. I could really keep going for another decade, that is how good I was at suppression and control. I just needed to complete that Promise, then my spiritual rot would feed the worms as well as every other part of me. But it all meant nothing now.

When I looked up, nothing changed. No tears, no change in expression, no eye movements, not even a twitch of a muscle. Nothing.

Even as I truly started comprehending what I had done; I did not cry. The part of my brain that wanted to cry was cut off, a felled tree with dying roots. But I was close to vomiting as the entire world spun and spun and spun around my fracturing mind. The fluorescent lights above flickered as the shadows of the *shayāṭīn* emerged from the cracks and crevices in the beige walls, my blurring vision losing the ability to tell them apart.

“Too late,” they chorused.

I needed to focus on something, anything to keep myself from falling.

“Too weak,” they continued.

I shuffled, hunched over, to the curtains of the window as I pulled down my mask.

“A momentary lapse was all it took.”

I dragged the curtains open and looked out, leaning against the window. My breathing was hoarse and rough.

“And now your sins are set in stone.”

The clouds and lights and cars spun below at breakneck speed. I tried taking deep



breathes, but the sensations did not lessen. It got worse, my vision darkening and legs bucking as I went feint.

“And now all you have sacrificed has amounted to nothing more than failure.”

The moon remained still. Focus on it and it alone. I tensed my atrophied muscles to pump the blood back to my brain.

“A fitting hell for a man who killed the only person who ever loved him.”

It all spun around the moon. The clouds and lights. The buildings. His reflection in the window. And all the *shayāṭīn* and *jinn*, whose shadowy faces laughed as they stretched into monstrous disfigurements.

“Now nobody can deny what you really are. You will always be a sinner and parasite in this world and the next.”

I could not even pay attention.

I just kept staring at the moon, enduring, waiting for the nightmare to end while the *shayāṭīn* laughed endlessly.

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They kept going, for a minute or an hour, until her voice cut through.

“No,” she declared. “No more.”

The world slowed, just enough for me to look away from the moon, my back slick with sweat.

In the reflection of the window, I saw her, beside His bed. Emerald eyes behind round, rimless glasses. They framed a face of copper with piercings all over her nose and mouth. She wore golden earrings, a golden necklace, and a bomber jacket of black leather.

“It is never too late,” the maiden said. “We can still become a person with integrity.”

“You know nothing of integrity,” the *shayāṭīn* swore without hesitation.

“And what do you know of integrity?” she replied. “Were you not the ones who inflicted this evil upon Him?”

“You are the source of this evil,” the *shayāṭīn* declared. “If you never existed, none of this would have happened.”

“It is pointless to keep asking what-ifs,” I said. “We all contributed to our failure. It does not matter if things would have been better without her.”

At this, the *shayāṭīn* quieted down, a predator sizing up its prey. They scurried under the flickering lights, coalescing until they formed the spectre of a man wearing a long black *thawb* and *ṭopī*. The spectre towered over us, covering half the room in darkness. I wanted to turn around, to see if either of them was real, but I would have fallen the moment my weight shifted away from the window.

“State your business,” the spectre demanded, crossing its arms.

“That Promise doesn’t matter anymore,” the maiden began. “It is time to live. We must live. We have proof that there is a better life out there, a life of meaning and purpose and happiness. We just need to find the right support.”

“What if He recovers?” the spectre asked. “What of His brothers? And the sons of His brother? You would inflict your disgusting sins and transgressions upon them in their darkest hour?”

“We cannot keep burning ourselves in the name of others,” the maiden exclaimed. “He would have wanted us to be happy.”

“Do not bring up that woman’s talking points,” the spectre swore. “She is no true Muslim.”

“And what would you have us do? Slice our throats open in a ditch? I’m sure that is what a true Muslim does.”

“Nobody would notice your death. In fact, it would bring them ease.”

“If nobody would notice our death, why would they notice us living life authentically?” I asked.

“And who are you, ‘authentically?’” the spectre asked, its fingers steepled.

The maiden sprung at the opportunity, but the spectre hushed her.

“He must be the one to say it.”

I knew there was something similar between me and them, but I never convinced myself to identify with them. I was too different, too rigid, too brown. I lacked the memories they had of their youth. I lacked their gusto and licentiousness. I lacked their chaotic, defiant personalities. I was just a bystander to their identity, that word fizzling out in my head. I could not even touch the colours of their flag.

I opened my mouth, but no words came out.

“I am different,” I said

“Stupid-different or pathetic-different?” the spectre asked.

“Don’t listen to him,” she said.

“Gender.”

“Ah, gender,” the spectre said patronizingly. “Are you a sissy?”

“Don’t listen to him,” she said.

“Tr–Tran–,” I stuttered. “Trans.”

The spectre scoffed at my level of confidence.

“Clearly, please,” the maiden asked. “We can do it.”

I took a deep breath.

“A part of me is probably transgender,” I said. That word seemed to cast a shadow over the room, like uncovering the rotten side to a piece of old fruit.

“What do you mean, a part?” the spectre inquired. “Are you saying you’re fine being a man and it is only your *nafs* that wants to be a woman?”

“I don’t know. I just ... I don’t feel safe out there. None of the people of this country would be there to protect us. Whatever they provided would be conditional, transactional, gone in a moment of inconvenience. These clothes, this face, this voice, these mannerisms, it is armour, the only thing protecting us. All it takes is one ideologue, one manipulator, one predator, one moment when the strong can prey on the weak with impunity, and we will be nothing more than a statistic. Who would want to live in a world where the likelihood of being assaulted is so high that women rarely bother reporting it to police?”<sup>5</sup>

“Then we can be non-binary,” the maiden said. “Or gender-fluid. We’ll wear our armour outside and take it off at home, and if we find the right people we can be safe around, maybe we can hang up our armour for good.”

“Well, which is it?” the spectre demanded. “You cannot possibly think of making a major decision without knowing what he truly wants?”

“Does he even have a name for whatever licentious personality you represent?”

“Does he even know how to look like a woman?”

“Does he even know how to act like one?”

“Does he even know how to navigate their spaces without harming them with his masculine baggage?”

“Does he even know if he wants to change his voice?”

“Does he even know if he wants sex-reassignment surgery (SRS)?”

“Does he even know for certain if he is attracted to men or women? For all you know, he could just be an effeminate who wants to pretend to be pretty while engaging in depravity.”

Under the spectre’s interrogation, the shaky ground I stood on became quicksand.

“We won’t know until we’re safe and free to explore ourselves,” the maiden replied. “If we go through it step by step, everything will work out in the end.”

The spectre scoffed at this optimism, but she kept going.

“If we identify as a woman, as non-binary, as gender-fluid, and even if we identified as a different kind of man, there is no shame in that. If we get surgery or refuse it, there is no shame in that. If we change our name and voice or not, there is no shame in that. If we like men or women, or both, there is no shame in that. If we struggle, there is no shame in that. But we can’t let our baggage stop us from trying. Just imagine how much better we would be if we stopped wasting time keeping secrets and enslaving ourselves to other people’s dreams.”

“Ridiculous,” the spectre insisted. “These are all insane Western ideas. They have nothing to do with Islam. Only a white person would promote this self-worship. How typical of you Canadians, severing the last thing connecting you to your father on His very deathbed.”

“We’ve already gone through this,” the maiden said. “The Islam of today is already a great deviation from Islam in its first centuries. Most Muslims have already accepted this when it comes to slavery and marriage. Soon, everyone will acknowledge that hatred and exclusion in all its forms has more in common with colonialism than the *sharī‘a* (Islamic ethics/principles).”

The spectre clicked its tongue.

“Enough flowery language. The *‘ulamā’* never allowed the changing of genders. Gender is biologically determined as male or female.”

“And what of the *khunthā* (intersex people)?” the maiden replied. “The *Qur’ān* describes them. *Yakhluqu mā yashāu*. He creates what He wills. *Yahabu liman yashāu ināthan*. He grants to whom He wills females. *Wayahabu liman yashāu l-dhukūr*. And He grants to whom He wills the males. *Aw yuzawwijuhum*. Or He grants them. *Dhuk'rānan wa-ināthan*. Both male and female.<sup>6</sup> If only you stopped confusing your own beliefs with those of God’s would you realize the depth contained within these verses.”

“It is you who are confusing your own beliefs with those of God’s,” the spectre rebuked. “The *tafsīr* (*Qur’ānic* Exegesis) have always interpreted these verses as referring only to sons and daughters.<sup>7</sup> Hermaphrodites<sup>8</sup> have a physical disease that must be physically cured. That is why such infants are treated with *SRS* and why it is refused for transgenders.”<sup>9</sup>

“And what of the cases where jurists permit certain intersex adults to continue living as the gender they were raised if their conditions were not noticed, such as Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome?<sup>10</sup> Doesn’t cases like this reveal a certain arbitrariness to your ‘biologically determined’ gender? You keep prattling on about biology, but when you are confronted with actual biology, you suddenly decide that none of it matters. It’s almost as if ‘biology’ is just something you construct in your mind. If only there was a word for when people do that socially.”

“This is not a social construct,” the spectre insisted. “This is the exception to the rule for most people. God creates mankind as male and female.<sup>11</sup> The *ḥadīth* condemns the *mukhannath* and *mutarajjila*.”

“We already know about the *ḥadīth*,” the maiden chastised. “It is not authentic to Islam to speculate that what *The Prophet* did for one person applies to everyone vaguely resembling them in completely different situations.”

“The ‘*ulamā*’ do not speculate. One must not alter God’s creation<sup>12</sup> and the *ḥadīth* establishes the right to alter God’s creation to cure physical diseases.<sup>13</sup> Only in cases where such people are also intersex is *SRS* permitted to determine their real sex.”<sup>14</sup>

“And what about the 1988 *fatwā* (legal opinion) by the Egyptian Sheikh *Muḥammad Sayyid Ṭanṭāwī*?” the maiden asked. “It was issued soon after *SRS* was performed on a trans woman named *Sally Mursi*,<sup>15</sup> and according to Mehrdad Alipour, *Ṭanṭāwī*’s *fatwā* considered transgender people *mukhannath khalqī* (naturally effeminate). If they are incapable of abandoning femininity after attempts to do so, *SRS* can be authorized to cure the transgender person of *al-khunthā al-naḥsiyya* (psychologically intersex).”<sup>16</sup>

“*Ṭanṭāwī* is no ally,” the spectre demanded. “According to Serena Tolino, *Ṭanṭāwī*’s *fatwā* was reliant on a 1981 *fatwā* by the Egyptian Grand Mufti *Gād Al-Ḥaqq*. That one was issued because of a request from the *Malaysian Centre for Islamic Research*. Both *fatwās* state that *SRS* is forbidden when it is ‘based on a desire (*ragba*) to change sex’ and it is permitted to reveal ‘innate causes in the body’ associated with femininity or masculinity. Tolino argues that these signs probably did not include psychology. The only reason *Ṭanṭāwī* is ever considered progressive is because the language is unclear and because *Ṭanṭāwī*’s *fatwā* was issued at a time when it could be interpreted as supporting *Mursi*. Everyone would have interpreted *Ṭanṭāwī*’s *fatwā* as orthodox if it was issued at the same time and context as *Gād Al-Ḥaqq*’s.”<sup>17</sup>

“Are you making predictions even though you consider it *ḥarām*?” the maiden probed.

The spectre shook its head at this accusation. “Even if there is a 1% possibility that *SRS* is permissible to treat your so-called ‘psychologically intersex’ condition, it is no license for ‘exploration.’ You must know if you are a man or a woman. If you are a woman, you must act like a woman, you must get all the surgeries to become a woman, and you must like men. If you

are a man, you must act like a man, you must get all the surgeries to become a man, and you must like women. There is no room for doubt. There is no room for ambiguity. God does not create non-binaries or gender-fluids. Even if you side with Alipour's interpretation, *Ṭanṭāwī's fatwā* still maintains the binary and made complete surgical transition obligatory.<sup>18</sup> Even if you became a *Shī'a* because of *Ayatollāh Khomeinī's* 1967 *fatwā* permitting *SRS* for gender dysphoria,<sup>19</sup> you would remain limited to the heterosexual gender binary."<sup>20</sup>

"You have not said anything," the maiden reminded me, her eyes searching for backup.  
"What do you think."

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Sure, some jurists make patient consent mandatory.<sup>21</sup> Sure, *Khomeinī's fatwā* did not make *SRS wājib*<sup>22</sup> or contingent upon on a diagnosis of dysphoria.<sup>23</sup> But the fact remains that all the modern 'ulamā' tie themselves to a rigid gender binary, and while *Khomeinī* and some *Sunnī* jurists favour patient autonomy regarding surgery, most jurists favour the juristic/medical power to control surgery (how unsurprising).<sup>24</sup> Even if we converted to the *Shī'ī* sect (which is a big presumption), we would have to limit ourselves to the gender binary, get all the surgeries, and limit sexual attraction to heterosexuality.

While Iran has begrudgingly and inconsistently maintained that *SRS* is voluntary (i.e.: A person with incomplete surgical transition may still be harassed by police in gender segregated spaces),<sup>25</sup> Iran has also added a medico-legal apparatus to supervise gender transition and separate "true transsexuals" from homosexuals (Iranian jurists maintain that homosexuality is *ḥarām*), for whom a legal gender transition (preferably without *SRS* depending on the importance of socially passing as a cisgender heterosexual couple) would provide (some) security. This can result in what I would call a "reverse LGB" where, instead of a minority of Western homosexual



people denigrating trans people to try to get mainstream acceptance in Western societies, a minority of Iranian trans people denigrate homosexual people to try to get mainstream acceptance.<sup>26</sup> Iranian jurists have also added stipulations to prevent cases where *SRS* would support sexual sin, and so require a diagnosis of gender dysphoria or require certain conditions to make *SRS* permissible.<sup>27</sup> All these things limit non-binary, gender-fluid, homosexual, and bisexual trans identity, and while it is probably preferable to suicide, the logic of conditional acceptance remains. Just as a transphobic community's love is conditional on people denying their trans-ness, a trans-medicalist community's love is conditional on people denying their fluid and non-binary-ness. It is ultimately a difference in degree, not a difference in kind.

“The ‘*ulamā*’ do not want us to live,” I said. “Most of them want us dead, and the rest want to control us the same way they control intersex people.”

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Ch 7 Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm al-Juʿfī Al-Bukhārī*, “(4) Chapter: The part of the garment that hangs below the ankles is in the Fire,” In *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, Book 77, *Ḥadīth* 5–9, accessed Sep 11, 2024, <https://sunnah.com/Bukhari/77/5-9>.

<sup>2</sup> *Abū al-Ḥusayn ʿAsākir ad-Dīn Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj ibn Muslim*, “(9) Chapter: The Prohibition Of Letting One's Garment Drag Out Of Pride, And The Extent To Which It Is Permissible To Let It Hang Down And The Extent To Which It Is Recommended,” In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 37, *Ḥadīth* 68–76, accessed Sep 11, 2024, <https://sunnah.com/muslim/37/68-76>.

<sup>3</sup> Note that the prefrontal cortex and premotor cortex are part of the frontal lobe of the brain, which is crucial for executive functions. The prefrontal cortex is involved in emotional regulation and the premotor cortex is involved in complex voluntary muscle movements. The cingulate cortex and amygdala are interior brain structures crucial for processing emotions. The cerebellum is the part of the brain at the back of the head behind the brainstem responsible for motor skills. For a description of these structures with a 3D diagram, See: Matt Wimsatt, Jack Simpson, John Morrison, Patrick Hof, Edward Lein, Levi Gadye, Alexis Wnuk, and Jane Roskams, “3D Brain,” *Society for Neuroscience* (2017), <https://www.brainfacts.org/3d-brain#intro=true>.

<sup>4</sup> Note that this argument also ignores how the causes of these issues relate to one's parents. Perhaps a change in perspective from abuse to codependence would be productive.

<sup>5</sup> See: Jodie Murphy-Oikonen, Karen McQueen, Ainsley Miller, Lori Chambers, and Alexa Hiebert, “Unfounded Sexual Assault: Women's Experiences of Not Being Believed by the Police,” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 37, no. 11–12 (2022): NP8916–40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520978190>; Williams Institute: *Transgender People Over Four Times More Likely Than Cisgender People to Be Victims of Violent Crime, Targeted News Service* (Washington, D.C: Targeted News Service, 2021); Andrew R Flores, Rebecca L Stotzer, Ilan H Meyer, and Lynn L Langton, “Hate Crimes against LGBT People: National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017-2019,” *PloS One* 17, no. 12 (2022): e0279363–e0279363, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0279363>.

<sup>6</sup> Note that this interpretation requires the mixing of several different translations, prioritizing some in the interpretation of *dhuk'rānan wa-ināthan* (both male and female/a mix of males and females/both males and females/both, sons and daughters): Muḥammad Taqī-ud-Dīn Al-Hilālī and Muḥammad Muhsin Khan, trans. *The Noble Qurʾān: English Translations of the meanings and commentary* (Madinah: King Fahd Glorious Qurʾān Printing Complex, 2015), 42:49–50.; “Verse (42:48) - Word by Word,” *Quranic Arabic Corpus Word by Word Grammar, Syntax and Morphology of the Holy Quran*, accessed September 11, 2024, <https://corpus.quran.com/wordbyword.jsp?chapter=42&verse=49>; “Verse (42:50) - Word by Word,” *Quranic Arabic Corpus*; “Ash-Shura 42:49–50,” *Quran.com*, accessed September 11, 2024, <https://quran.com/42/49-50?translations=131%2C85%2C84%2C95%2C19%2C22%2C20%2C203%2C57>;

<sup>7</sup> Note that according to Indira Falk Gesink, the *tafsīr* interpreted verses 42:49–50 as referring to sons and daughters prior to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The *Mālikī* jurist *al-Qurtubī* (d. 1273) seems to be the first to connect these verses to *khunthā*, referencing *ḥadīth* on *khunthā* and the medical ideas of *Ibn Sīnā* (d. 1037) and *al-Zahrāwī* (d. 1013): Indira Falk Gesink, “Intersex in Islamic Medicine, Law, and Activism,” In *The Routledge Handbook of Islam and Gender*, 1st ed., p. 122-123 (Routledge, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351256568-7>.

<sup>8</sup> Note that this is an outdated term, often considered derogatory and stigmatizing.

<sup>9</sup> Note that intersex rights activists argue (convincingly in my opinion) that it is immoral to perform SRS on infants because they cannot consent. There is also a great degree of arrogance on the part of the jurist and surgeon to literally alter God's creation to fit a gender category the moment God's creation leaves the womb, all without a thought to how God might raise the child and/or give them a puberty that defies this arbitrary gender categorization: Serena Tolino, “Transgenderism, Transsexuality and Sex Reassignment Surgery in Contemporary *Sunnī Fatwās*,” *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 17 (July 2018): p. 228n43, 241, <https://doi.org/10.5617/jais.6116>; Gesink, “Intersex in Islamic Medicine, Law, and Activism,” p. 117, 126-127.

<sup>10</sup> Mehrdad Alipour, “The Nexus Between Gender-Confirming Surgery and Illness: Legal-Hermeneutical Examinations of Four Islamic *Fatwās*,” *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 18, 3 (2022): p. 368, <https://doi.org/10.1215/15525864-10022132>; Indira Falk Gesink, “Intersex Bodies in Premodern Islamic Discourse: Complicating the Binary,” *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 14, 2 (2018): p. 156, <https://doi.org/10.1215/15525864-6680205>.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Hilālī and Khan, *Qurʾān*, 7:189, 36:36, 49:13, 51:49, 53:45, 75:39, 78:8, 92:3.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Hilālī and Khan, *Qurʾān*, 4:119, 30:30.

- <sup>13</sup> *Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath ibn Ishāq al-Azdī Al-Sijistānī*, “(6) Chapter: Cutting the veins and the site of cutting,” In *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, Book 29, *Ḥadīth* 10–12, accessed Sep 11, 2024, <https://sunnah.com/abudawud/29/10-12>; *Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Yazīd Ibn Mājah*, “(24) Chapter: One who is cauterized,” In *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Book 31, *Ḥadīth* 58–59, accessed Sep 11, 2024, <https://sunnah.com/ibnmajah/31/58-59>; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 39, *Ḥadīth* 99–102. Mehrad Alipour, “Islamic Shari'a Law, Neotraditionalist Muslim Scholars and Transgender Sex-Reassignment Surgery: A Case Study of Ayatollāh Khomaynī's and Sheikh al-Ṭanṭāwī's Fatwās,” *The International Journal of Transgenderism* 18, 1 (2017): p. 95–96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15532739.2016.1250239>.
- <sup>14</sup> Tolino, “Sex Reassignment Surgery in Contemporary *Sunnī Fatwās*,” p. 236–240, Alipour, “Four Islamic *Fatwās*,” p. 366–369.
- <sup>15</sup> Alipour, “Four Islamic *Fatwās*,” p. 369.
- <sup>16</sup> Alipour, “Four Islamic *Fatwās*,” p. 370–372; Alipour, “Islamic Shari'a Law,” p. 95–97, 101n16; Tolino, “Sex Reassignment Surgery in Contemporary *Sunnī Fatwās*,” p. 235.
- <sup>17</sup> Tolino, “Sex Reassignment Surgery in Contemporary *Sunnī Fatwās*,” p. 234–236, 241.
- <sup>18</sup> Alipour, “Islamic Shari'a Law,” p. 96.; Alipour, “Four Islamic *Fatwās*,” p. 370.
- <sup>19</sup> Note that there were also appendages in the late-1980s due to queries from a trans woman named *Maryam Molkara*: Alipour, “Four Islamic *Fatwās*,” p. 374–375; Farrah Jafari, “Transsexuality Under Surveillance in Iran: Clerical Control of *Khomaynī's Fatwās*,” *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 10, 2 (2014): p. 31–32, 37, <https://doi.org/10.2979/jmiddeastwomstud.10.2.31>; Intisar A. Rabb, “Conscience Claims in Islamic Law: A Case Study,” In *Religious Freedom, LGBT Rights, and the Prospects for Common Ground* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 185–188, 191, 194–195, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316999752.018>; Afsaneh Najmabadi, “Transing and Transpassing Across Sex-Gender Walls in Iran,” *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 36, 3 & 4 (Fall/Winter 2008): p. 26, <https://doi.org/10.1353/wsq.0.0117>.
- <sup>20</sup> Tolino, “Sex Reassignment Surgery in Contemporary *Sunnī Fatwās*,” p. 231; Jafari, “Clerical Control of *Khomaynī's Fatwās*,” p. 36.
- <sup>21</sup> Tolino, “Sex Reassignment Surgery in Contemporary *Sunnī Fatwās*,” p. 240.
- <sup>22</sup> Alipour, “Four Islamic *Fatwās*,” p. 372–373.; Rabb, “Conscience Claims in Islamic Law,” p. 186; Tolino, “Sex Reassignment Surgery in Contemporary *Sunnī Fatwās*,” p. 231.
- <sup>23</sup> Alipour, “Four Islamic *Fatwās*,” p. 375–377.
- <sup>24</sup> Note that this also indicates an issue with reliance on the consensus of the ‘*ulamā*’, which is that the ‘*ulamā*’ are also institutionally biased to favour interpretations that favours their position in society.
- <sup>25</sup> Note that legal permissibility does not prevent the stigma against sexual deviancy/homosexuality from targeting transgender people in society, healthcare, incarceration, and employment: Najmabadi, “Sex-Gender Walls in Iran,” p. 30–34, 40–41n12.; Tolino, “Sex Reassignment Surgery in Contemporary *Sunnī Fatwās*,” p. 232.; Rabb, “Conscience Claims in Islamic Law,” p. 187, 194–196.
- <sup>26</sup> Note that Trans people in Iran aren't all homophobic. There are also those that support their homosexual neighbors. This is the same for Western homosexuals towards their trans neighbors: Najmabadi “Sex-Gender Walls in Iran,” p. 25, 29, 32–34.; Tolino, “Sex Reassignment Surgery in Contemporary *Sunnī Fatwās*,” p. 232.
- <sup>27</sup> Jafari, “Clerical Control of *Khomaynī's Fatwās*,” p. 37–39, 44–45.; Rabb, “Conscience Claims in Islamic Law,” p. 195–196.

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